

We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in any case, do not use it. [136] 415

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and making the oil are very important among all the tribes. 262 249

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee. 249 464

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 481

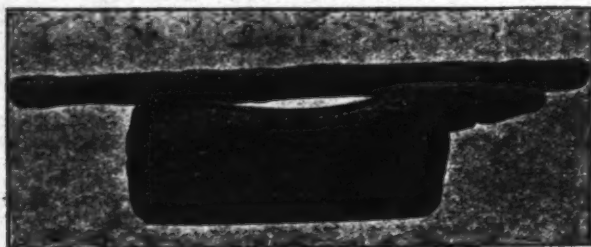


Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil. [412]

20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
 604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
 464 against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
 lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
 Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
 souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
 fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
 or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
 for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
 long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
 only a few bakonga (copper arm of leg bands); these he already owed
 to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
 his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
 589 out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
 595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
 562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
 relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
 not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
 nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
 cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
 604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
 603 usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
 young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
 still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
 of the children shifted then as follows:

[338]

